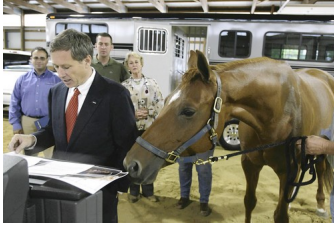


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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) gets a gentle nudge from a show mare named Grand Jete during a news conference Monday at Shadowbrook Farm in Mettawa. (Tribune photo by David Trotman-Wilkins / September 8, 2008)

Nearly a year after 59 horses crammed into a trailer designed for swine overturned on a north suburban road, federal lawmakers on Monday pushed to ban double-deck trailers for transporting horses.

The proposed legislation introduced this summer would prevent the interstate transportation of any horse in a vehicle with two or more tiers stacked atop one another, said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who sponsored the Horse Transportation Safety Act. Violators could be fined \$100 to \$500 for each infraction.

A state-level proposal failed to get the necessary support.

"My hope is we can make sure that what happened in Wadsworth in October does not happen again," Kirk said as a show mare named Grand Jeté nosed around during a news conference at Shadowbrook Farm in Mettawa.

A rollover crash killed 19 of the 59 Belgian draft horses traveling in a double-deck trailer near

Wadsworth Road and U.S. Highway 41. The horses were tangled and trapped inside until firefighters, veterinarians and horse enthusiasts conducted a five-hour rescue. The 40 surviving horses have settled into adoptive barns, said Donna Ewing of the Hooved Animal Rescue and Protection Society in Barrington.

The tractor-trailer's driver and the horses' owner were charged in the Oct. 27, 2007, accident. Keith Tongen of Brownston, Minn., who surrendered ownership of the horses, faces misdemeanor counts of cruel treatment of animals and one count of failure to provide humane care and treatment of animals. Driver James Anderson faces identical charges.